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SUBJECT: US CHAMBER-ISTANBUL CHAMBER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

REF: A. ISTANBUL 159

[1B.](#) 2006 ANKARA 5673

[¶1.](#) Summary. Inspired by an earlier US Chamber - Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB) project (ref B) designed to familiarize small and medium sized Turkish businesses with the U.S. market, the Istanbul Chamber hosted a series of workshops in cooperation with the U.S. Chamber on March 20-23. This is the first phase of a business development project designed to build a support infrastructure for efforts by medium sized Turkish companies to expand in the U.S. market. The second phase of the project involves "doing business in Turkey" workshops to be held in three U.S. cities during late April/early May. The third phase of the project will be a 'train the trainer' exercise designed to further familiarize medium sized Turkish companies with the U.S. market. This private-sector led initiative complements government-to-government efforts to increase bilateral trade and investment levels such as the recently concluded Economic Partnership Commission talks. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) On March 20-23 the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ITO) held a series of three workshops designed to educate the Turkish business community on ways to develop business opportunities in certain sectors of the U. S. market. The workshops were focused on the processed food; marble, natural stone and tile; and furniture sectors. Expert presenters from the U.S. described general market trends, regulatory and customs issues, logistics and distribution channels, trade shows and other resources as well as recounting success stories. Presentations and panel discussions were followed by active Q&A sessions.

[¶3.](#) The second phase of this project is to facilitate "How to Do Business in Turkey" forums in Chicago, an as yet to be determined city in California and one additional U.S. city beginning in May. These will be educational business outreach programs designed to make U.S. companies aware of opportunities to do business with Turkish partners. The final phase will be an intensive training program in Washington for business counselors who will return to Istanbul to advise Turkish companies on how to navigate the U.S. market.

[¶4.](#) Comment: This private-sector led initiative should help Turkish exporters deal with some of the market unfamiliarity concerns voiced by local business leaders to EEB A/S Sullivan during the February EPC meetings (ref A). This entirely private sector-funded project is a natural extension of a partially USAID-funded business development project that brought together the Ankara-based Turkish Union of Chambers and the U.S. Chamber last year and is an example of the multiplier effect of the earlier project. The U.S. Chamber

organizer told us that they were hopeful that this project could be expanded to include more sectors as well as cities other than Istanbul. End Comment.

JONES